

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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SUBJ: FOREIGN BUYER PROGRAM: RESULTS OF DELEGATION OF
HOUSEWARE BUYERS VISIT TO US.

REF: (A) USDOC 08218 (B) TUNIS 3306

1. EMBOFFICERS MONTGOMERY, GALLAGHER AND BEN MILED MET WITH MESSRS MOHAMED HATTAB DABBECH, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF TUNISIAN OFFICE OF COMMERCE (OCT) AND MAHAMED KOOLI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF MAGASIN GENERAL ON JUNE 15 IN MR DABBECH'S OFFICE TO DISCUSS RECENT TUNISIAN HOUSEWARE BUYERS' VISIT TO USA, WHICH RESULTED IN MARKET-TESTING ORDER FOR ABOUT \$500,000. ABDELHAMID ACHOUR, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF MONPRIX COULD NOT ATTEND DEBRIEFING SINCE HE WAS ABROAD.

2. MR DABBECH AND MR KOOLI SAID THEY WRE EXTREMELY SATISFIED WITH RESULT OF THEIR TRIP TO USA. THEY FOUND US VERY INTERESTING AND DIVERSIFIED SOURCE OF SUPPLY.

3. THE VISIT TO CHICAGO, THEY SAID, WAS SOMEWHAT
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PREMATURE AS SUPPLIERS IN THAT AREA WERE HOLDING OFF NEW PRODUCTS FOR THE YEARLY HOUSEWARES SHOW. IN NEW YORK AREA, MISSION MEMBERS WERE PLEASED TO FIND A GREAT VARIETY OF SUPPLY SOURCES AND A WIDE RANGE OF PRICES.

4. BASED ON PREVIOUS MAGASIN GENERAL EXPERIENCE, DURING

IN-STORE PROMOTION PROGRAM, MISSION MEMBERS' FIRST TARGET WAS GLASSWARE WHICH SELLS VERY WELL IN TUNISIA. MAGASIN GENERAL STILL BUYS FROM ANCHOR HOCKING BUT IT WANTS TO DIVERSIFY ITS SOURCES OF SUPPLY, (A MOTTO OF TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT NOWADAYS), AND OFFER SOMETHING DIFFERENT TO ITS CLIENTS. THEY FOUND IDEAL SUPPLIER IN BROKWAY GLASS CO OF BROCKWAY, N.J. WHOSE PRICES, THEY SAID, ARE ONE-THIRD OF ANCHOR HOCKING'S. THUS, OCT PLACED \$80,000 ORDER TOBE FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER \$80,000 IN VERY NEAR FUTURE, AND MAGASIN GENERAL PLACED \$100,000 ORDER. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MUCH MONOPRIX IS ORDERING. OCT ALSO PLACED \$140,000 CUTLERY ORDER WITH EKCO HOUSEWARE, WHILE MAGASIN GENERAL ORDERED \$100,000 WORTH. SAMPLES OF GLASSWARE AND CUTLERY ARRIVED JUNE 14. EMBOFFICERS SAW THEM AT OCT WHOSE PRESIDENT, MR KAROUI, IS ALSO VERY PLEASANTLY SURPRISED WITH QUALITY AND LOW PRICE OF US CONSUMER GOODS.

5. WE URGED MR KAROUI TO VISIT HOUSEWARES SHOW IN JULY. HE SAID HE WILL TRY. IN CASE HIS DUTIES WILL NOT PERMIT THIS, HE WILL SEND TWO OFFICIALS TO HOUSEWARES SHOW.

6. MISSION WAS INTERESTED IN GE OR COMPARABLE US-MADE SMALL HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES SUCH AS MIXERS, BLENDERS, JUICERS, CHOPPERS, ELECTRIC KNIVES, HAIR DRIERS, YOGURT MAKERS AND ALSO HOUSEHOLD WASHING MACHINES. THEY WERE TOLD IN UNCLASSIFIED

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WASHINGTON THAT THESE AMERICAN APPLIANCES DO NOT EXIST IN 50 CYCLES AND 220 VOLTS. WE WONDER WHETHER GE EXPORT DEPARTMENT HAS SUCH MACHINES, IN RIGHT CYCLE AND VOLTAGE.

7. WHEN IT CAME T SHIPPING GOODS TO TUNISIA, MISSION WAS CONFRONTED WITH A MAJOR PROBLEM: FREIGHT. CONSIDERING DISTANCE BETWEEN US AND TUNISIA, FREIGHT BECOMES MAJOR FACTOR AS CUSTOMS DUTIES ARE PAID ON CIF PRICE. SHIPMENT COST ON US FLAG VESSELS RANGES FROM 75 TO 100 PERCENT OF COST OF GOODS. HOWEVER, TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT-OWNED SHIPPING COMPANY, SOCIETE TUNISIENNE DE NAVIGATION, QUOTED \$4,000 PER 40 FEET CONTAINER, APPROXIMATELY 50 PERCENT OF VALUE OF GOODS, IN THE CASE OF GLASSWARE (THIS CONSTITUTED GREAT SAVINGS OF 20 FEET CONTAINER).

8. MISSION MEMBERS STRESS THAT PURPOSE OF THEIR FIRST VISIT TO US WAS TO KNOW US MARKET AND TO SELECT VARIOUS ITEMS WITH GREATEST SALES POTENTIAL IN TUNISIA. ORDERS WERE MADE FIRST IN LIMITED QUTANTITIES TO ASCERTAIN TUNISIAN CUSTOMERS' REACTION TO EACH ITEM BEFORE DETERMINING SIZE OF SUBSEQUENT ORDERS. MESSRS DABBECH AND KOOLI

ARE CONFIDENT THAT FUTURE ORDERS WILL BE UP TO EXPECTATIONS
OF US SUPPLIERS.

9. COMMENT: SINCE THIS OPERATION WAS PROMPTED UNDER
PRIME MINISTER'S INSTRUCTIONS, HIGHEST AUTHORITIES IN
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR I WASHINGTON
ARE BACKING IT UP AND ARE GIVING IT THEIR PERSONAL
ATTENTION. WE SUGGET COMMERCE URGE US SUPPLIERS OF CONSUMER
GOODS TO WRITE AND KEEP SENDING CATALOGS AND PRICE LISTS,
IN FRENCH IF POSSIBLE, TO MESSRS DABBECH, KOOLI AND
ACHOUR, WITH COPIES TO EMBASSY. THIS OPERATION IS AN
IMPORTANT BREAKTHROUGH; WE SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT
TO KEEP IT GOING AND DEVELOP IT. COMMERCE FIELD OFFICES
SHOULD BE ALERTED AND REQUESTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS
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EFFORT BY URGING SUPPLIERS IN THEIR AREAS TO CONTACT
OCT, MG AND MONOPRIX.
MULCAHY

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